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increase in Maine between 1870 and 1900 upward of 40,000 belonged to Portland, Lewiston and Biddeford-Saco. Of the 93,000 increase in New Hampshire 45,000 was the share of Manchester, Nashua and Concord. Of the 14,000 gain in Vermont 5,000 was in Burlington alone.

Of the sixteen counties in Maine four actually declined in population between 1880 and 1900, and eight more made a gain of less than 2,000. In New Hampshire two of the ten counties sustained losses and four more gained less than 2,000. Of fourteen counties in Vermont six actually decreased and six gained less than 1,000. In all three of these States, therefore, it is true that the increase in population was confined to a very restricted area and that in a vasty larger area stagnation or actual depopulation was apparent in 1900 and had been for a considerable number of years.

In Vermont the influence operating in the other States are clearly more widespread and uniform. That this State will prove the only one in the nation to show a decline in the number of inhabitants for the last census period is now generally expected. Yet in those portions of Maine and New Hampshire which, like the whole of Vermont, are removed from any considerable industrial center and are agricultural in character precisely the same conditions prevail.

A decline in rural population is common enough among all European nations. Most conspicuous in France, it is yet visible in eastern Prussia and in England and Scotland, where the total population of the nation is growing at a rapid rate. It is sufficiently unusual in this country to provoke general comment whenever revealed. The distinction, therefore, that Vermont seems likely to acquire as the first example of actual depopulation in America in the twentieth century will doubtless cause comment all over the country.

The News From Orleans.

The reappearance of the Hon. IRVING L. HOMMEDIET as the Roosevelt champion in the county of Orleans is too notable a political event to be passed by without at least a minor mention. It is true that four years have passed since L. HOMMEDIET retired to that obscurity from which he now impressively emerges, yet the fact that even after so great a lapse of time he is still recalled by thousands of admiring fellow citizens is a tribute to the fame acquired in the State Senate at Albany.

At the present time it is customary to refer to every State Senator as a member of the Black Horse Cavalry and to detract from a glory that was once considerable by bestowing it upon heroes of unequal merit. But in the legislative days of the Hon. IRVING L. HOMMEDIET membership in that celebrated mounted body meant something beyond empty honor and a share in indiscriminate abuse.

It is possible that the large bodies of eminent citizens who under the chaperonage of the Citizens Union, the City Club and equally unselfish organizations so often journeyed to Albany to forget the hero of a thousand lobby fights? Is there no recollection surviving of the score of local traction bills whose title was derived from the Orleans statesman? The Niagara power struggles, the defeat of so-called gas, the assault upon the law protecting savings bank investments, all these famous legislative episodes offered to L. HOMMEDIET the opportunity to make his name illustrious in a whole State.

Retired from the State Senate by the combined efforts of the late Governor HIGGINS and the Hon. JAMES W. WADSWORTH, Jr., when his fame became a little too great even for the relatively hardened susceptibilities of his constituency, the Hon. IRVING L. HOMMEDIET has preserved a tenuous political existence by increasing loyalty to the policies of the Hon. CHARLES EVANS HUGHES. His reappearance at this time, his eager volunteering to aid the Hon. THEODORE ROOSEVELT in his fight to purify Republican politics at Albany, is an event of real importance.

Nowhere more than in this city should the return of ex-Senator L. HOMMEDIET command attention. His appearance as the self-proclaimed champion of THEODORE ROOSEVELT in this State serves to indicate the extent of the popular uprising against bosses and legislative corruption in rural New York. With L. HOMMEDIET leading the hosts of righteousness and the forces of virtue in Western New York, it will be a heroic boss indeed who will not tremble.

Pirates.

The five American sailors who were brought all the way from Portugal for trial, and about whom there lingered so long as they were on the sea a suspicion of piratical adventures, are something of a disappointment. The charge of piracy may not be made against them, they may be accused merely of mutiny on the high seas. The distinction was one finer than it is now, in the good old days a pirate had the privilege of being hanged from the yardarm, the mutineer was hanged along with other criminals in a jail yard or the town commons.

The whole proceeding was so impractical as to be unworthy of a place in the accepted annals of the craft of Captain Kidd. The names of three of the men are given as WILLIAM E. ALBERT, CHARLES TURNER and GEORGE WHITE. Pirate ALBERT, Pirate TURNER, Pirate WHITE, shades of MORRIS, "Black Beard" and BARBAROSSA, are these names for black flag, skull and cross bones adventures? It is a safe wager that not one wore a red cap, a black beard or a leather belt with ivory-handled knives and pistols.

The last pirates that New York had to do with were worthier of traditions. Pirate GIBBS was a man with a reputation all along the coast and a price on his head. His mate, as was perfectly proper in the democracy of piracy, was the mulatto WANSLEY. They murdered the captain of a brig off the Jersey coast, terrified the others of the crew, scuttled the ship, loaded a treasure of

Mexican gold on a long boat, and buried it on Harren Island. Then as proper pirates should they began courting. Their hanging took place a short time afterward, or, to be exact, on April 27, 1830. There is no note of these interesting details in this last story of the sea. Nothing about blood, ingots of gold, cutlasses, or fortresses. Merely "the prisoners were apprehended" along with witnesses. Besides, the death penalty was changed in 1897 to imprisonment for life. What is the use of being a pirate? There is nothing in it any more.

Super Dreadnoughts for France.

France laid down on August 1, 1900, 23,000-ton battleships, to be called the Jean Bart and the Courbet, the one at Brest and the other at Lorient. These are the largest vessels that France has yet undertaken to build. They are to be armed with twelve 12-inch guns and twenty-two 5.5-inch guns. They are to have engines of 28,000 horse-power and they are expected to develop a speed of twenty knots. Their crews will consist of 941 officers and men. They are planned to be in all respects of the super-dreadnought class.

It has taken France hitherto four to five years to build much smaller armored vessels, while Germany and England turn out dreadnoughts in from two to two and a half years. The French Government has issued orders to the naval authorities that these two ships must be ready to go into commission in three years. With this end in view great reforms have been made in maturing the work. Exact plans and specifications have been prepared with the understanding that they shall not be altered. Constant changes of plan have been the crying evil of the French dockyards for many years. All the contracts for materials and construction were given out before a plate was rolled or a rivet driven.

French expert opinion, as reflected in the Paris newspapers, is to the effect that these are the first French ships fit to be matched against the latest warships of England, Germany and other dreadnought building Powers. It is true there are the vessels of the Danton class, six of them, the last of which will not be finished until next year, which equal the Dreadnought in tonnage, being each of 18,000 tons displacement, but the French authorities regard the Dreadnought herself as already almost a back number and besides, it is considered that a great mistake has been made in the armament of these French ships, the Danton, Delafont, Condorcet, Marabou, Voltaire and Vergnaud. To secure multiplicity of guns only four of the largest, the 12-inch size, were used, and they were put, in the older battleships, in two turrets fore and aft. The rest of the primary battery consists of twelve 9.5-inch guns placed in six turrets, three on each side of the vessel. This duality of calibre is actually spoken of as taking the ships out of the dreadnought class.

In the Jean Bart and the Courbet there are two turrets with two guns each forward and two aft. In each case one turret is on a higher level than the other. Two other turrets are amidships, one on each side, with a range of fire of 150 degrees. Thus the new ships will have a broadside fire of ten guns and a fore and aft fire of eight. The secondary battery is in the protected citadel below the turrets and affords an effective fire of six to nine guns in any direction.

Considering the enormous cost of these vessels, about \$13,000,000 apiece, it is not surprising that the French newspapers, probably at Government instance, are doing a good deal of explaining why vessels 5,000 tons larger than the Danton class, which in turn were 1,000 tons larger than anything in the French navy, are imperative. The favorite argument is the tremendous development of German maritime power. Admiral MAHAN in an article in the London *Daily Mail* recently said it was futile and dangerous to attempt to determine the purpose of German naval expansion. "The German fleet now exists, and that fact in itself is food for reflection for every Power in the world. Admiral MAHAN had the United States and Canada in mind to both of which he considers the German fleet a potential danger. The Frenchman thus reads the lesson.

Anything to France this idea of Admiral MAHAN may not say that there is no country which has more cause to reflect on the progress of the German navy.

That the comparative table of the Dreadnought class in 1911 is presented, here is an unanswerable argument, the French say, for rushing to completion the programme of Admiral LAFFAYETTE, which contemplates a minimum of four squadrons of seven dreadnoughts each, six in active service and one in reserve, twenty-eight vessels in all. The Jean Bart and the Courbet are the first units toward this total. The advocates of naval expansion say: "Let us without any delay begin the construction of five more ships, so that we may have at least one squadron complete in 1914."

The cockiness with which many writers give unfavorable opinions of the ship and prospects of the French naval program is rather tiresome, because in many cases it is evident that these persons have had only a superficial view of the regions they criticize or condemn. The history of exploration is full of false judgments as to the ultimate utility of lands that failed to please the early conquerors. Even the greatest of men have sometimes judged wrongly.

Many years ago DARWIN wrote an illuminative account of the geology, botany and other conditions of Patagonia as he saw it along the coast. He described the cheerless and sterile shores, the barrenness of water, the meagre vegetation, and gave the impression that the land was almost valueless. The people of Argentina still declare that the gloomy picture he painted delayed all attempts toward the settlement of southern and central Patagonia for decades. It is in southern Patagonia and the Argentine part of Tierra del Fuego, that nearly 10,000,000 sheep, about a fourth of all the sheep in the republic, are now herded.

The learned German Dr. BREMERER was also mistaken when he declared that

wheat would never be grown in the central pampa, and say was another distinguished observer, Dr. FRICKER, when he said thirty years ago that the province of Corioba would never contribute to the wheat supply. It is rather hazardous to declare offhand that no way will be found to turn almost any corner of the world to good account.

For the sixth time the veteran WILLIAM A. LARSEN is national tennis champion. It is doubtful if there was ever a cooler player or an abler tactician. He seems to improve with age. However, it would not be fair to his latest defeated opponent in the finals at Newport, THOMAS C. BENDY of California, not to point out that the champion is always fresh when he meets the challenger and the latter has lost his edge in the preliminaries. The champion showed a splendid physical advantage. For the challenger there should be at least one day's rest before he is called upon to stand the supreme test.

Fallen at length is the Hon. LEONIDAS FELIX (no more, alas, no more) LIVINGSTON, Uncle LON LIVINGSTON, one of the most cherished and venerable treasures and institutions. For years that our memory have we watched him. As we think of him the golden years of the Farmers' Alliance returns. Cato of Corinth, far more famous, if anything, grows in Georgia, deprived of your help in Congress, if the earth doesn't hold back her fruits, the cow her milk, then we have known you to little purpose.

Mr. Taft. To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Reading over the leading editorial in today's SUN, Mr. Taft, I feel impelled to write my thanks to you for saying publicly and so strongly something which I myself feel very strongly. We are mistaken greatly if there are any Americans who are not proud and honor as he deserves the able, upright, modest, patient, just man and statesman whose one fault or misfortune is that he has a heart. No object but to do his duty faithfully, without flourish, swagger or intrigue.

If you are right in your optimistic forecast, there is hope for this republic. If the majority has been captured permanently by a machine from which more and more of the world renowned from history, this republic will have started on the way of other republics further south.

In any case let me thank you for allowing me to express an opinion which I had formed of Mr. Taft fourteen years ago when as a reporter I frequented his court during the trials of many moonshiners in Louisville, Ky.

NEW YORK, August 24.

Sombre View of a Friend of the Old Guard.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Most of our politicians seem to be bent on blocking progress or improvement. What do they want? Another panic? Is that what colored Roosevelt meant by "surrounding" us? To surround? To every one who opposes a dictatorship? To such as like to breathe in their own fashion?

Does victory for the "old guard" mean a better chance to make our living unmolested? That is the question of all of them. The "old guard" means a better chance to make our living unmolested? That is the question of all of them. The "old guard" means a better chance to make our living unmolested? That is the question of all of them.

NEW YORK, August 25.

Wants New Leaders.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: I am a Republican of the independent stripe. I would not follow a leader who is not a leader, replaced with others of different opinion of thought and action. I dislike ward politics as played by Barnes, Wadsworth, Hoffman, Sherman and their kind.

The Senate does not act as possible in politics as in any other body.

KENNETH McMAHER.

BROOKLYN, August 25.

In the Name of Harmony.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: In the interest of harmony in the Republican party of New York State, I would like to suggest that the Republican party should not allow itself to be divided by the names of its leaders. It should be united by the name of the party.

WESTON, August 25.

The Chief Socialist.

From the *Review* in *McClure's Magazine*. Theodore Roosevelt is the chief socialist worker of the country. Who has equalled him in paternalism and centralization? These are strong works of socialism.

Dangers in the Street Cars.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: On the crowded Broadway surface car on which I rode yesterday to day I sat on the rear seat. Next to me sat a middle-aged woman who at one of the stops got up and moved forward to the front of the car. She was carrying a large bag and was very fat. She was very fat and was very fat.

NEW YORK, August 26.

The Color of Goldsmith's Maid.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: How Mr. Taft, I feel impelled to write my thanks to you for saying publicly and so strongly something which I myself feel very strongly. We are mistaken greatly if there are any Americans who are not proud and honor as he deserves the able, upright, modest, patient, just man and statesman whose one fault or misfortune is that he has a heart.

NEW YORK, August 26.

The Erring Sisters.

To THE EDITOR OF THE SUN.—Sir: Mr. William Taft, I feel impelled to write my thanks to you for saying publicly and so strongly something which I myself feel very strongly. We are mistaken greatly if there are any Americans who are not proud and honor as he deserves the able, upright, modest, patient, just man and statesman whose one fault or misfortune is that he has a heart.

NEW YORK, August 26.

Mr. Roosevelt's Hunting Exploits.

From the *Review* in *McClure's Magazine*. Mr. Roosevelt's hunting exploits are a disgrace to the name of the United States. He is a disgrace to the name of the United States. He is a disgrace to the name of the United States.

NEW YORK, August 26.

Nine Short Stories Will Be Found in Harper's Magazine for September.

Harper's Magazine for September will contain nine short stories. The stories are by various authors and are of various lengths. The stories are by various authors and are of various lengths. The stories are by various authors and are of various lengths.

THE HISTORICAL SENSE.

Max Nordau, after creating a new infamia by putting into the madhouse all genius of the nineteenth century, has returned to his earlier and much more plausible manner, the manner of his clever and readable "Paradoxes," and has tackled a rather "large order" in the shape of universal history. His new book, already translated into French, is to appear this autumn in English bearing the modest title of "The Meaning of History." We have not seen the original German, only the French version, "Le Sens de l'Histoire," translated into that tongue by Dr. Jankelevitch. The essay is bound to be read, and is extremely topical, as the word of the author and there is always a capital "but" in the Nordau case—the main thesis is directly derived from the sterling essay of Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Use and Abuse of History," written in January, 1874, when Nietzsche was mentally vigorous; it will be found in his volume "Thoughts Out of Season" (Part II). It may be recalled that this is not the first time Dr. Nordau has resorted to borrowing a leading idea from Nietzsche. In his attack on Wagner he borrowed the composer with artillery from the arsenal of Nietzsche, notably from "The Wagner Case," and later quite ungratefully turned his guns upon his intellectual creditor. However, Nietzsche himself sniffs at the notion of "gratitude," and no doubt would have applauded the shrewd tactics of the Hungarian journalist.

We say the chief arguments in Nordau's book are taken from Nietzsche, but with a difference, and that lies in the lack of measure to be found in the living Nietzsche's plan of attack. For him the historical sense is not a "sixth sense," it is a sense as it is, unless a flowering of the aesthetic sense. Mythomania is all history, and mythomania are all historians. This he does not express in such terms, though his import is unmistakable. We detect in his work the new currents of pragmatism, or of its superior French variety, the realism of Henri Bergson. Let us first read a few sentences of Nietzsche on the abuse of history.

"The man whose historical sense was a malady from which men suffer, the world process an illusion, evolutionary theories a subtle excuse for inactivity. History, he is never tired of repeating, is for the few, not the many; for man, not youth; for the great, not the small. * * * History has no meaning except as the servant of life and action; the most of us can only act if we forget. He condemns the motives of the great men of the past by their own and use the past to justify their present. The historical sense makes its servants passive and retro-spective. * * * You can only explain the past by what is highest in the present."

Thus Nietzsche, Nordau is not so broad-minded. History has no scientific value, he stoutly declares, and supports his contention with a wealth of illustrations, some of it, it may be confessed, ingenious, even convincing. And he does it all with a freedom from metaphysical verbiage that is refreshing. History is not a descriptive science, because objective reality will always remain inaccessible to the human mind, constructed as it is to formulate a priori notions, but so important in the apprehension of actuality. If history were a rational science it would be possible for a historian to foresee events, which, of course, is impossible. History does not repeat itself, a facile epigram is the converse.

History is fiction, the product of highly specialized brains selecting, as do artists, their material from the events of material and blating upon them in all good faith, though often naively. A novel with a strong tendency motive in history, therefore its educative value is nil to nil. It is a form of aesthetic activity delightful in the hands of those great imaginations we call historians. Consider, exclaims Nordau, how near yet to us is Napoleon. Yet which Napoleon are we to accept from the historians? The Napoleon of Taine, that Corsican bandit, or the Napoleon of Sir Hudson Lowe, that Englishman, or the subtly destructive Anatole France? Nordau does not quote the gentle Anatole, but he should read "The Red Lily" for a poisonous deprecation of the First Consul. Then there are the Napoleons of Hugo, Lamartine, Tolstoy and Renan. Or the hero of Heine, with the hand as white as marble? Which is the real Napoleon? All or none? Possibly the latter, according to Nordau, for no man, not even the conqueror himself, knew the genuine Napoleon, even his judgment of him is subjective and imperfect. This argument, as old as Pyrrho, might be applied as a sort of acid test to